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Sibylline Oracles<sup>1</sup> and Isaiah 11 is illustrated by a translation of the former into English hexameters. Appendix C furnishes a conspectus of the Messianic passages in Isaiah, and the full and suggestive book concludes with lines on Saint Paul at the tomb of Vergil from a fifteenth century mass.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

JOHN C. ROLFE.

**The Story of Eleusis. A Lyrical Drama.** By Louis V. Ledoux. New York: The Macmillan Company (1916). Pp. xiv + 96.

It is perhaps a severer test of poetic power to write interestingly on a topic that is centuries old than to strike out a new theme. Mr. Ledoux bravely faced the test, and has stood it well. He was wise in choosing one of the loveliest of the Greek myths, that of Demeter and Persephone, treated with exceptional beauty in the 'Homeric' Hymn to Demeter, as the groundwork of his "lyrical drama". While there is nothing novel in his handling of the story, he has produced a readable and in places really charming poem. The style and versification are, with a few exceptions, facile and graceful, and some passages show real beauty of thought and expression, as for example the lines

For life is like a mound of shifting sand  
On some low island set in leagues of sea;  
The winds of being blow from out the waste,  
And up the beaches rolls the crumbling wave.

Everywhere a fine and delicate feeling for the loveliness of nature is evident.

The piece is constructed in five acts, as follows: I Persephone—scene laid in Sicily, on the hillside whence she was carried off by Hades; II Beside the Well at Eleusis—Demeter in the guise of an old woman is hired to tend the infant Demophon; III Demeter at Eleusis—her plan of making the child immortal is frustrated by the terrified mother; IV Persephone in Hades's realm, and released by command of Zeus; V The temple—the institution of the Eleusinian ritual.

The poem is hardly likely to be effective if played as a drama, nor indeed need we suppose that the author intended it for actual performance; yet a dramatic reading of large parts of it, in costume, given by students of Barnard College, proved to be very interesting.

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E. D. PERRY.

**Studies in Stichomythia.** By John Leonard Hancock. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1917). Pp. 97. 75 cents.

The dialogue in Homer suffered from two limitations: a formula was used to introduce the speaker, and the poet's objection to *enjambement* prevented the exchange of brief utterances. But the drama made possible the *mimesis* of actual conversation. In tragedy, which came into being at the time when the archaic art of Greece was laying undue stress on form at the expense of true imitation, the briefer conversations tended to fall into the line-dialogue, the so-called stichomythy.

<sup>1</sup>Oracula Sibyllina, recensuit Aloisius Rzach, Vindobonae, 1891, p. 90.

Dr. Hancock has investigated certain phases of this strange literary phenomenon. His Studies fall naturally into three groups of about equal length: (1) The motives and uses of stichomythy in Attic tragedy and in Seneca (Introduction, Chapters I, II; we note in passing that Sophocles in contrast with his two rivals shows the freedom of the true artist, and that, "though Seneca achieved a surface brilliance, an epigrammatic subtlety, he went no further"); (2) Special devices of the line-dialogue in Greek tragedy, and similar features in the conversational parts of the Platonic dialogue (Chapters III, IV); (3) Survivals in post-classic drama, from the Latin plays of the eleventh and twelfth centuries and the early French, Italian and English drama, to Shakespeare, and finally to Meredith and the modern prose drama (Chapters V, VI).

The author rejects the conclusion of Gross (Die Stichomythie, etc., 1905) that the line-dialogue arose from the influence of choral responsion, and finds for its use three original motives: the agonistic tendency of all Greek literature, the love of subtlety, and the fondness for symmetry. The emphasis which he lays in his Introduction (compare also page 10) upon the first of these motives leaves the impression that he regards it as more than anything else the cause of stichomythy. This theory is hardly supported by the evidence. In the tragedy which is in all probability the earliest that we possess, the Suppliants of Aeschylus, there are six stichomythic passages, and of these three contain no agonistic element, two more only a 'touch', and only one a real wrangle. In the other plays which Dr. Hancock analyses there is abundant evidence that the line-dialogue was used frequently for other purposes than as a vehicle for debate, repartee, etc. Again, the stichomythic passages of Seneca, who is far from origins, "are more uniformly agonistic in spirit than those of Greek tragedy". Finally, in Aristophanes' the debate is a prominent feature, yet stichomythy plays an insignificant part: in the Agons of both the Clouds and the Frogs, for example, the dialogue is exceedingly free. Hence it is hard to believe that the agonistic tendency of Greek literature had very much to do with the origin of stichomythy. Nor do we think that the author is reasoning in the right direction when he argues that subtlety is one of the reasons for the adoption by the father of tragedy of the line-dialogue as a literary form. We should prefer to hold that the love of subtle retort and flash of wit which is seen in so much of Greek literature finds in the line-dialogue an excellent medium of expression. For this keenness of retort is equally manifest in the forensic speeches of Sophocles and Euripides, in the Antigone, the Alcestis and the Medea, for example. Therefore, while Dr. Hancock by his analyses has made clear two very important features of stichomythy, it seems to us that he has been led to emphasize unduly the value of these as evidence for the explanation of its origin.

<sup>1</sup>Comedy is outside the limits of the dissertation.